



## Executive Council

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### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Part I: Current situation and activities

#### (b) Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda

##### I. Introduction

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1. The Secretariat continued to work determinedly in advocating tourism's contribution to economic growth and sustainable development in order **to move the sector higher on the international and national political and economic agendas** and obtain the necessary policy support for its sustained growth.

##### II. Mainstreaming tourism in the international and national agendas

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2. On the **international level**, two significant milestones were achieved in this regard during the month of June 2012.

- (a) At the **Rio+20 Conference** world leaders agreed on the **Outcome Document, *The Future We Want*, emphasizing that “tourism can make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, has close linkages to other sectors, and can create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities”**. The inclusion of tourism in the Outcome Document of a UN Conference on Sustainable Development for the first time was the culmination of year-long efforts by UNWTO Member States, namely the Republic of Korea, co-chair of the Preparatory Committee, and the Secretariat. Further achievements in this area include tourism's inclusion in the Joint Statement of the UN Chief Executive's Board (CEB) to the Rio+20 Conference and in the Oceans Compact, a UN initiative launched in August 2012 by UN Secretary-General to address the most pressing issues regarding the sustainable management of oceans.
- (b) **For the first time, the G20 Leaders recognized the role of tourism as “a vehicle for job creation, economic growth and development”** (G20 Summit Declaration, Los Cabos, Mexico). This acknowledgment came on the back of the T.20 process, a Members-driven initiative started in 2010 with the full support of UNWTO that gathers the Ministers of



Tourism of the G20 (T.20 meetings were held in 2010 in South Africa and the Republic of Korea, in 2011 in France and in 2012 in Mexico). **Furthermore, the G20 Leaders committed to “work towards developing travel facilitation initiatives in support of job creation, quality work, poverty reduction and global growth”**, a major breakthrough in the drive to promote visa facilitation. This was the result of the work of the 4th T.20 Ministers’ Meeting, held in Mexico (15-16 May 2012), which focused on **tourism as an alternative to job creation**. The meeting looked into how **visa facilitation can act as a lever to stimulate demand and create jobs and adopted a landmark declaration encouraging the G20 to “recognize the role of travel and tourism as vehicle for job creation, economic growth and development and commit to travel facilitation as a conduit for job creation, decent work, poverty alleviation and global growth”**. UNWTO and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) research, presented to the 4th T.20 Ministers Meeting, showed that improving visa processes and entry formalities could generate an extra US\$ 206 billion in tourism receipts for G20 countries and create as many as 5.1 million additional jobs.

This recognition by the G20 Leaders is a significant success for the sector and could not have happened without the support of President Calderon and without the commitment of the Minister of Tourism of Mexico, who so successfully chaired the 4<sup>th</sup> T.20 Ministers’ Meeting.

The 5<sup>th</sup> T.20 Ministers’ Meeting will be held in 2013 in Russia.

3. Within the objective of **positioning tourism as a priority in the national agendas**, the ‘**Global Leaders for Tourism**’ campaign has advanced substantially during 2011 and 2012. The campaign, a joint initiative by UNWTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), comprises the presentation of an Open Letter to Heads of State and Government worldwide, seeking their acknowledgement of the relevance of tourism in facing today’s global challenges. **Between 28 February 2011**, when President Felipe Calderón of Mexico first received the Open Letter, **and the end of July 2012, 35 leaders had joined the Campaign (10 new countries joined since the last report to the Council)**. Many other countries have expressed their interest in joining the initiative.

4. **Within the work towards promoting tourism as a key national policy, three issue have been identified as a priority during 2012: travel facilitation, taxation and consumer protection:**

- (a) **Travel facilitation:** UNWTO has been working with several industry bodies and governments to advance visa facilitation. The Secretariat has been raising awareness among all countries of the potential of maximizing new technologies in improving visa application and processing formalities, as well as the timings of visa issuance, and advising them to analyse the possible impact of travel facilitation in increasing their tourism economies and employment. In this regard, a set of recommendations was included in the report prepared for the 4<sup>th</sup> T.20 Ministers’ Meeting on “The Impact of Visa Facilitation on Job Creation in the G20 Economies”.

Visa facilitation was the focus of the 4<sup>th</sup> T.20 Ministers’ meeting (see point 2) and will also be object of a dedicated debate session during the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Council. The issue of “Open borders and open skies: breaking barriers to travel” will be further debated during the forthcoming UNWTO & World Travel Market Ministers’ Summit (6 November 2012). Moreover, the Secretariat has contributed to the debates on travel facilitation held during

the Meetings of the Tourism Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

- (b) **Taxation:** The recent trend of introducing new and/or increasing existing taxation on travel and tourism, namely on air travel and accommodation, represents a serious threat to our sector faced already with significant levels of global taxation. The Secretariat has continued to raise awareness of this issue in several international forums and coordinating with industry bodies and national governments to voice the concern of the tourism sector in this respect. The Secretariat has also been coordinating with its representative at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) the support for a global solution for aviation emissions.
- (c) **Consumer Protection:** please refer to document CE/94/3(e).

**5. It is increasingly important that Member States support the efforts of the Secretariat in positioning tourism as a key sector within regional and international policy decisions.** This includes regional processes and institutions such as ASEAN, APEC, the European Union (EU) or regional Development Banks as well as international ones such as the UN development agenda. The inclusion of the tourism sector in key framework documents allows UNWTO and its Members to adequately pursue the inclusion of the sector in the consequent decision taking on planned developments and investment both as well as increase UNWTO's capacity to access extra-budgetary funds.

### **III. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council**

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6. The Executive Council is requested:
- (a) to note the work of the Secretariat in mainstreaming tourism in the international and national agendas;
  - (b) to commend the Members which have supported the inclusion of tourism in the Rio Outcome Document and the G20 Declaration and encourage all Members to do the same within the regional and international processes and forums in which they are involved; and
  - (c) to commend the Members which have joined the Open Letter initiative and encourage those which have not yet joined to do so.